



Housing

Chapter 5

City of Fremont
General Plan

Adopted December 2011



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Introduction

The purpose of the Housing Element is to ensure a sufficient supply of decent, safe, and affordable housing for current and future Fremont residents.

The Housing Element of the General Plan is the only element in the Plan that must be updated on a specified schedule and that must be certified by the State. Accordingly, the City adopted an updated Housing Element in July 2009, in advance of preparation of the other Elements of the updated General Plan. The Element was certified by the State Housing and Community Development Department in October 2009 as meeting all requirements of State housing law.

Because of the timing of its preparation, and also because of the many mandated State requirements regarding its contents, the Housing Element has a different “look” than the rest of the General Plan.

This Executive Summary is meant to present the highlights of the adopted Housing Element. A copy of the certified Element is available on the City's website and at the City's Planning Division. The Housing Element includes an Introduction that describes how housing fits into the overall General Plan vision, namely that future housing will be focused near transit. The Introduction also describes how the State and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) assign specific targets for housing to individual cities. Fremont's assignment for the 2007-2014 period is 4380 units, with more than half of those units affordable to very low and low income households.

Review of the 2003 Housing Element

The Housing Element includes a review of the previous (2003) Housing Element. This review is required by State Law and is intended to provide a starting point for developing an updated Housing Element. Staff evaluated the effectiveness and appropriateness of the five goals, 12 policies, and 47 implementation programs from the 2003 Element. Based on this review, the City carried forward a number of policies and programs from the 2003 Element in the updated Element.

The 2003 Housing Element included an assigned goal for Fremont of 6708 units for the 1999-2006 time period. Of this total, 3529 units were to be affordable at moderate incomes or below. Overall, 4776 new units (71%) were actually produced, and 760 affordable units were produced, about

THE HOUSING ELEMENT CYCLE

The City's adopted Housing Element is valid through 2014. Based on current State requirements, Fremont will need to revise its Housing Element twice—for the period 2014-2022 and again for 2022-2030—during the time horizon of the adopted General Plan.

22% of the City's allocation of affordable units. The shortfall may have been due to a number of factors, including lower local job growth than anticipated; a lackluster market for multifamily housing during the time period, resulting in a lack of market-rate multifamily development during the period; and limited funding availability for subsidized affordable housing.

Needs Assessment

As part of the Housing Element, the City prepared a detailed *Needs Assessment* analyzing Fremont's demographics. The *Needs Assessment* identified a number of trends that informed the goals and policies of the updated Housing Element, including:

- Fremont's population continues to grow, but its rate of growth has slowed dramatically from the 1980s and 1990s;
- The average household size (total number of people per household) of 2.98 has increased since 1990 (2.86), perhaps reflecting an increase in multi-generational households;
- The City is ethnically diverse, with a large Asian population;
- Fremont's population continues to grow older on average, with those aged 75 years and over comprising 4.4% of the population in 2006 compared to 2.3% in 1990, while 20-35 year-olds made up only 19% of the population in 2006 compared to 29% in 1990; and
- Extremely low-income residents (those earning 30% or less of median income) make up 7% of the total households in Fremont, while very low- and low-income residents make up 6% and 10% of total households, respectively.

Sites Inventory and Analysis

A major component of the Housing Element is an analysis of sites that are available for the development of housing to meet the City's assigned need. Chapter 4 of the Housing Element identifies sites in Fremont where zoning is in place to allow for housing development, including higher-density housing (30+ units per acre) that is typically more affordable, and emergency, transitional and supportive housing.

The analysis shows that Fremont has land available and zoning in place to meet the City's assigned share of regional housing between now and 2014.

Constraints on Housing

While the City has made extensive efforts to encourage development of affordable and market-rate housing, there are many governmental and non-governmental constraints that make housing development more difficult.

Governmental constraints are typically rules that apply to all development that are intended to meet other community interests. Examples of such constraints in Fremont include:

- Zoning and other land use controls such as height limitations, parking requirements, and open space standards;
- Local code amendments requiring enhanced fire safety systems and improved structural engineering;
- Fees and exactions that offset impacts on existing infrastructure like parks and roadways, but add to the cost of housing development; and
- Permit processes that ensure compliance with relevant codes but add time and cost to the cost of development.

Non-governmental constraints include financial challenges such as availability of financing and the high cost of land in the Bay Area, as well as resistance to development of affordable housing from neighborhood residents (“Not In My Backyard” or NIMBYism).

A number of the goals and policies in the Housing Element are aimed at eliminating or lessening constraints to development of affordable housing.

Housing Goals

The Housing Element includes an extensive set of goals, policies, and actions to ensure that the City has an adequate supply of decent, safe and affordable housing. The seven goals are listed here; for specific policies and implementation measures, see the adopted Element.

Goal 1: Preserve and Enhance Existing Homes and Neighborhoods

Goal 2: Ensure Availability of High Quality, Well-Designed and Environmentally Sustainable New Housing of All Types Throughout the City

Goal 3: Encourage the Development of Affordable and Market-Rate Housing in Order to Meet the City's Assigned Share of the Regional Housing Need

Goal 4: Preserve Existing Supply of More Affordable Housing Options

Goal 5: Ensure that all Persons Have Equal Access to Housing

Goal 6: Continue to Play a Leadership Role and to Work Collaboratively with Other Organizations to Maintain and Expand the Range of Housing Alternatives in Fremont and the Bay Area

Goal 7: Ensure Availability of Supportive Services to Help People Stay Housed